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To: Sady Bartlett [Sady.Bartlett@austinenergy.com]
Re: Backup for meeting of May 1, 2015, L.I.C.A.T.F.
Date sent: May 28, 2015

Deaths Attributable to Heat in European Heat Wave of 2003

In a Citizen Communication to the Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force on May 1, 2015, I offered some statistics about the number of deaths that occurred in Europe in 2003 due to the historic heat wave. In a time when extremes of weather occur more frequently and may exceed any past experience, I believe this is relevant to the Task Force's work as lack of air conditioning or other forms of cooling can be life-threatening during extreme heat events. The eventual total of some 80,000 deaths (apparently the deadliest heat wave of all time)¹ ranks this event with some of the world's worst weather disasters, while being perhaps the least-recognized.

It is notable that heat-related deaths can occur quietly and the true number may only be known years later. In a CNN report in August 2004, one year after the event, the number of deaths was estimated at 25,000 to 35,000, with 14,000 of those deaths occurring in the hardest-hit country, France.²

In a 2006 article at the Earth Policy Institute, the deaths were estimated at 52,000, with this comment:

The full magnitude of this quiet catastrophe still remains largely an untold story, as data revealing the continent-wide scale have only slowly become available in the years since. All in all, more than 52,000 Europeans died from heat in the summer of 2003, making the heat wave one of the deadliest climate-related disasters in Western history.³

By February 2007, a full-scale demographic analysis of excess deaths from June through September of 2003, conducted for the European Union Community Action Programme for Public Health, revealed an excess mortality of 80,000 deaths.⁴

¹

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_natural_disasters_by_death_toll#Nine_deadliest_natural_disasters_since_1900

²<http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/science/08/02/heatwave.europe/>

³http://www.earth-policy.org/plan_b_updates/2006/update56

⁴ Report on excess mortality in **Europe during summer 2003** (EU Community Action Programme for Public Health) Feb. 28, 2007. More than **80,000 additional deaths**, June-through-September.
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/2005/action1/docs/action1_2005_a2_15_en.pdf

